Iron County Register

BY ELI D. AKE.

IRONTON, - - - MISSOURI.

WORK.

If some great angel spake to me to-night
In awful language of the unknown land,
Bidding me choose from treasure infinite,
From goodly gifts and glories in his hand,
The thing I coveted, what should I take?
Fame's wreath of bays? the fickle world's esteem?
Nay; greenest bays may wave on brows that ache,
And world's applauding passeth as a dream.
Should I choose Love to fill mine empty heart
With soft strong sweetness, as in days of old?
Nay; for Love's rapture hath an after-smart,
And on Love's rose the thorns are manifold.
Should I choose Life with long-succeeding years?
Nay; earth's long life is longer time for tears.

I would choose Work, and never-failing power
To work without weak hindrance by the way,
Without recurrence of the weary hour
When tired, tyrant Nature holds its sway
Over the busy brain and toiling hand.
Ah! if an angel came to me to-night,
Speaking in language of the unknown land,
So would I choose from treasure infinite.
But well I know the blessed gift I crave,
The tireless strength for never-ending task,
Is not for this life. But beyond the grave
It may be I shall find the thing I ask;
For I believe there is a better land,
Where will and work, and strength go hand in hand.

—*All the Year Round.*

OUR BEGINNINGS.

Dr. Jerome Chilcote and I bear to each other the by no means unusual relationship of husband and wife. Considering, however, that we live in a State where a certain portion of the married couples are, so to speak, born divorced, and of the remainder many achieve divorcement, and some have divorcement thrust upon them, the fact that we are very much one in heart and life, after seven years of marriage, might be considered somewhat singular and exceptional.

Do not understand me to say that we never disagree, for we do, upon one subject. Dr. Jerome has a theory about wood, and persists in the practice of buying a load of dry wood and at the same time one of green, requiring me to mix it as I burn it. Generally speaking I don't mix it; and I will submit the question to any jury of women and housekeepers whether it comes within the pale of feminine possibilities to put a green stick in the kitchen stove when a dry one lies just beside it. This matter of the fuel is the ulcer through which all the unpleasant humors of our domestic system is discharged, leaving everything pure an lovely after each eruption and its attendant dressing of mutual concessions and endearments.

It was on the second anniversary of our marriage, a balmy day in April, that Jerome said:

"Rose dear, let us leave this place and go West."

I had been looking for a proposition of some kind and was ready to acceed to anything. I told him so, and we set about our preparations for removal at once and at the end of a month from the time the subject was first broached between us we found ourselves here in this lively young Western town of Crummelsville.

Just eighteen months from the date of our arrival in Crummelsville the ground was broken for our new house. To be sure, the lot was not quite paid for and the house could not be finished that year; but we longed so for a home of our own, and Jerry said we needed something in which to deposit our surplus cash (!), to prevent extravagance. How Jerome worked those days, and what a talent he developed for collecting debts! Where there was no money, he would take pigs, fowls, grain, wood—anything that his debtor could be induced to spare. It was our only salvation. So much labor for nothing anyhow! So many poor who could not pay, and so many better off who didn't care!

One day I accompanied the doctor on a long drive through the "hoop-pole country," as a certain timbered district was called. On our way we encountered a heavily-bearded man wearing a fox-skin cap and carrying a long rifle. While he was yet at some distance Jerome said: "There comes Tim Frost. He owes me seven dollars and a half and I am going to make him pay it now."

"I don't believe he has a cent in the world," I remarked.

"No matter; I'll take 'dicker.'"

"O, please don't!" I exclaimed, thinking of an old watch and shot-gun at home that he had taken as "dicker" on accounts. "I wouldn't take the poor fellow's gun. It is all he has to make a living with."

Just then the man came up, and salutations were exchanged.

"How are you, Tim?"

"How are you, doctor?"

"Let's see, Tim; it is now about six months that you've owed me that little bill. How would you like to pay it today?"

Tim swore he would like to pay it exceedingly well, but he was "dead broke." "Not a darned bit of use to talk about payin' to-day, doctor; but jes you wait till my corn and taters come off!" with an encouraging nod and wink.

"You'll need all the corn and potatoes you'll have," said Jerome, dryly. He had seen the place where they ought to be growing. "I want to get you out of debt to-day. Are both of those dogs yours that I hear barking off there?"

"Sartin." said Tim.

"Couldn't you spare me one of them?"

"Well, maybe I mought, but ef you're wantin' a dog, now, a rale smart chicken dog, there's Jake Morrisson, down on the bottom——"

"Never mind Jake Morrisson and his chicken dog," interrupted Jerry; "I want that pup that's barking now—no; the other one. Listen! There, now, that's the yelp. I'll give you seven dollars and a half for that dog, and take him on his bark."

"Why, that's Chunk," said Tim deprecatingly. "I'd rather not part with Chunk."

But Jerome was hunting under the seat for a piece of rope, and Tim Frost whistled up his dogs. Chunk was selected and secured to the tail-board of our wagon. Then Jerome wrote out on a leaf of his prescription-book a receipt in full for Frost's indebtedness and passed it to the woodman, who deposited it in the fox-skin cap and expressed himself very well satisfied with the transaction.

"O, Jerry, how could you?" I said, as we drove on. "To think of taking into the family a dog raised as that dog has been!"

Jerome gave one of his unconscionable laughs as he looked at my forlorn face and then back at the horrible thick-bodied little beast that came bouncing along in our rear.

"Never mind, Rosy," he said; "the dog sha'n't trouble you and one of these days I'll turn him into a cow."

I confess I had but small faith that such a transformation could be effected. Chunk was tied in the stable and carefully fed by my husband.

About a week later he had another call which would take him into the very heart of the "hoop-pole country." Before starting he took the old watch before mentioned, hung the guard about his neck and placed the monstrous thing in his pocket. Then the fowling-piece came in for a handling and was laid across the front end of the spring-wagon. Chunk's rope was fastened to the rear and Jerome drove off, while I stood in the door, laughing at his ludicrous appearance. I thought he did it for drollery; but at night he returned, *sans* dog, gun and watch, and accompanied by a boy who led a spotted two-year-old heifer—a little beauty, notwithstanding she was as lean as a hound. I named her Calico on the spot. The next spring she gave milk, and to this day Calico is one of my staunchest friends and allies. I accused Jerry of having swindled somebody dreadfully in that trade. He called me his second conscience and told me "quiet right down," for it was all perfectly straight and honest.

"I traded," said he, "with old Tony Wallace. He had four head of young cattle and scant fodder for three, so, you see, the heifer or one of her companions must have starved before spring. He was keen to trade; said the dog and gun would help him to his winter's meat, and the watch would stand the old woman and himself a three months' credit at Jupp's grocery for tea and tobacco. Then, too, if you must know it, I gave him three dollars in money—more than he has had at one time in many a long day."

We moved into our new dwelling when it was little more than half completed. The work stopped when the funds ran low, for Jerome would not contract a heavy debt to the builder. We were not alone in occupying an unfinished domicile. It would have mattered little to us if we had been. We passed under our unpainted lintel and proceeded to arrange our few things with hearts as light as birds at nest-making. I took my little school into the parlor, and managed to teach it faithfully, and do my house-work out of hours. More than this, I took a boarder. I took him one day in Jerome's absence, and I am firmly of the opinion that if our lives had not been controlled by principle rather than impulse, we would have quarreled seriously over that.

"What did you do it for?" asked Dr. Jerome, with a volume of discontent in his voice.

"For the money," I replied. "Four dollars a week!"

"Meroenary woman!" he exclaimed. "To sacrifice the sacred privacy of our table and fireside for the paltry sum of four dollars a week!"

Mr. Lemuel Robertson, our boarder, was a short, rather stout man of about forty-five, I should say, though he carried himself with the slow grave dignity of a much older man. He had one of the very kindest of faces, which, when you talked to him, had a way of expressing evevy degree of interest by looks of interrogation and exclamation. His language, which was always scrupulously grammatical and well chosen, was also most carefully pointed and emphasized. He had not been in the house three days before Jerome gave him—behind his back, of course—the sobriquet of "Professor of Pragmatics," and before the end of the week he had the audacity to call him "Professor" to his face. The innocent creature looked flattered, and remarked, in his stilted phraseology, that he had never been a member of any faculty, but had frequently, in the course of his life, been mistaken for such a dignitary.

It was impossible to find out much about Mr. Robertson. When he applied to me for board and lodging he informed me that he was a bachelor and obliged to find a home wherever he could; that he had thoughts of becoming a permanent resident of Crummelsville, and—"Much, you know, madam, depends upon a man's first anchorage in a place. The doctor, madam, the foremost doctor in the town, is a person of position and influence, and I would very much like to be able to say I have my home at Dr. Chilcote's."

I never told Jerome this; it would have made him spiteful.

I assigned my boarder a chamber innocent of plaster, with a coat of pretty paper tacked over the laths. His luggage came—three heavy trunks—was carried up. The trunks contained books, tools, and some odd-looking pieces of joinery. His clothes were few and very threadbare. But he paid me four dollars every Saturday. He was very unobtrusive, keeping his room for the most part when about the house, and spending many whole days away, rambling in the woods and tramping up and down the numerous rapid little streams that thread this part of the country. He always carried a gun on these tramps, but never brought home any game. He was very neat in all his habits and a delicate and fastidious eater. I soon grew to like him, and Jerome certainly did not hate him, after he discovered that they had one taste in common.

Both were afflicted with what Miss Bremer, in "*The Neighbors*," calls a "carpentering mania." Mr. Robertson had a tool-box; so had my husband. During those idle months immediately succeeding our marriage Jerome had figured out an invention—an improved invalid bed—and since he had come West he had obtained letters patent upon it. He had never realized a dollar out of it and never expected to; nevertheless, it was a sort of pet with him. Some remark at the table, one day, turned the conversation upon what happened to be the hobby of both—mechanics. After dinner Jerome got out his little model and the "Professor" took it upon his knees as if it had been a baby. A long, low talk followed, and much caressive handling. After that, when Jerry had an hour or two of leisure, the two would go into the woodshed together and "tinker." Many were the pretty brackets, frames, etc., of which I was made the pleased possessor by this harmless amusement.

A few weeks passed and we had just become used to our new situation, when a thunderbolt fell in the shape of a letter from a connection of Jerome's family, threatening us with a visit of weeks. This person was none other than Miss Irene Grimes.

"Just think of it!" I groaned to Jerry, "We shall be ruined! I shall have to give up my school. You will have to spend your time carrying her about to see the country; there must be another chamber fitted up at once, and we will have to invite company, I suppose and everthing. I don't see what it means."

That night I dreamed of Irene Grimes. I thought she arrived one day in my husband's absence, and I stood still as she entered our door, perfectly bewildered by her almost divine loveliness. She was small, in my dream, with clustering blonde hair and a complexion whose delicate tinting varied continually, as did the light in her splendid eyes. In a voice exquisitely musical she asked for "Cousin Jerome." I smilingly told her he would be home soon, and would, I knew, be enraptured to see her; while I secretly wondered whether the sight of her fresh beauty, compared with my insignificant figure and pale cheeks, would not fill him with regret and wretchedness—whether his intensely appreciative heart might not be led captive against his will by this charmer. The thought seemed to smother me and I awoke in a nervous shiver.

Miss Grimes did arrive in Jerome's absence; but what a contrast to the angelic Irene of my dream! Not that she was positively homely; on the contrary, I have always considered her a fine-looking woman. She had a smooth, sallow complexion, beautiful abundant black hair and very white teeth, just uneven enough to prove that they were natural. But she was above medium height, square-shouldered and angular, and her motions were so abrupt! I knew myself to be petite and graceful beside her. Within the first hour or two she informed me that she was almost four years older than Jerome, and laughed in the jolliest manner imaginable over the "droll project," as she called it, which his family and hers had once entertained, of making a match between them. She had long wanted to come West, she said, and had no other relatives or friends to quarter upon except ourselves. She was not going to put us out any, and if we would only be docile to her at first awhile, she was sure we would not find her a particle in the way. I assured her—and with candor, for I foresaw I should like her—that her visit would give us great pleasure.

My husband came home and greeted her in his own frank, winning way, making inquiries about people whom they both knew and launching at once into a stream of easy, engaging conversation.

After she descended from unpacking, she went to a leathern reticule which she had left on the table, and took from it a small gold-mounted revolver.

"O, Miss Grimes!" I cried shrinking away a little—for I don't like fire-arms—"is it loaded?"

"Certainly," she replied, shortly; "I always carry it loaded when I travel alone. I would like to discharge the loads from your wood-shed door, if you will give me leave."

Leave was given, and in spite of my fears I followed her at a respectful distance. Just as she was about to shoot she spied Mr. Robertson sitting on a block in the back yard, cleaning the forest loam from his thick-soled boots. Dropping her arm, she said: "I shall frighten that man."

He heard her, and turned about, evidently comprehending the situation at once. "Never mind me, madam; fire away, only high enough."

And she did fire, emptying the six chambers of the revolver in quick succession. Then the "Professor" got up and came in. I do not remember whether I introduced them formally or not; I suppose I did, for I distinctly remember his taking the smoking weapon from her hand and uttering ejaculations of delight over its exquisite finish. After she had carefully wiped the dangerous toy and started up stairs to put it away, he remarked, admiringly, more to himself than to me: "A lady of remarkable spirit, I should say."

The next morning we induced Miss Grimes—who declared herself perfectly rested from her journey—to accompany Jerome on a five-mile drive over a pleasant piece of road, whence could be seen some fine farms and several pretty river views. When my school assembled at nine o'clock, I informed the little people that I had company from a distance to entertain, and that I should be obliged to give them a vacation of a few weeks, but that in a couple of months I would open my room to them again and hoped to see them all together once more.

As the days passed on, I found Irene very little in the way indeed. She seemed to be very deeply interested in the country and its resources, in the people and their methods of living. Then, too, she was a reader, and the "Professor's" library—we had no books but medical ones—was pressed upon her use. I found Mr. Robertson himself a most valuable aid in the hospitable duty of entertaining our guest. He had manifested from the first a marked admiration for her, and before long I began to suspect that it was returned in kind, if not in degree.

An amusing incident occurred one day, when Miss Grimes had been with us about a month. We were alone in the house, she engaged in letter-writing in her bedroom up stairs, I occupied with some household matters below. All at once there came a great shouting of men and boys, accompanied by a vast chorus of grunts and squeals. I knew in a moment what it meant. There had been, during the entire summer, a herd of many swine feeding on Baldwin's Prairies, a few miles north of us, and they were then being moved through the town to some point further south. Our lot was unfenced and there was as yet no foundation wall under our house, which rested on a number of small brick piers about two feet high. As the drove advanced, it spread out over the premises, and in spite of the drovers' efforts to prevent it, the stupid animals went under the house and crowded each other on till a solid mass of pork became wedged between the piers. I could hear, and even feel, their backs shoving and grating against the sleepers under my feet, and for a few moments I was really afraid the bricks might be crowded from under one or more of the corners, thus unsettling and damaging the house.

But fear gave place to a sense of the ludicrous when Miss Grimes came rushing down stairs, her face the picture of terror.

"Did you ever see the like of this, Rose? There are miles and acres of hogs! I can't see the end of the drove from the chamber window! Just feel the house jar! We shall be carried off on the backs of these dreadful creatures! Where do you suppose they are going?"

"To Cincinnati, probably," I replied; "and we shall get a free ride, part of the way at least."

"Rose Chilcote, we are in real danger," she cried, "and I do not see how you can laugh! Such an outlandish way of living!" she went on, her vexation getting quite the better of her good-breeding. "The garden all open to the world, and no underpinning to the house!"

A mariner shipwrecked on a pinnacle of rock in mid-ocean (if there are any pinnacles there) could not have looked more forlorn. She held in her hand a round basket, which I knew contained her cameo jewelry, a set of costly laces, and her beloved revolver. I have since wondered that she did not use the latter upon a few, at least, of the offending porkers. With her valuables held tightly, she stood in the open doorway, ready to spring, at all risks, if our poor little house showed signs of yielding to the pressure. All at once her look of dismay gave place to one of gratitude and joy.

"Come here, Rose," she said. "Just see that brave man!"

I looked out. There stood Mr. Robertson on the opposite corner, making encouraging signals, and indicating by dumb-show that at some favorable moment in the near future he would be with us.

"See," she exclaimed, "he is determined to make the attempt!"

Sure enough, with another signal of hope, he started in to ford the tide of rooters, which was growing perceptibld thinner. He carried a stout cudgel any dealt a blow here and a kick there as he waded along. When he neared our veranda, Irene leaned far out and gave her hand as to an exhausted swimmer. With this aid, he made a spring, clearing the backs of several long-legged shoats and landed, beaming, at Miss Grimes' side.

"How dared you venture?" I heard her say. Then my feelings overcame me and I withdrew quickly.

How Jerry laughed when I described the situation to him that night!

"To think," I said, "that she should regard him in the light of a deliverer! What upon earth could he have done for us if the accident we feared had actually occurred?"

Jerry gave me a quizzical look as he replied: "I hardly know, to be sure. Possibly, however, it was not any more absurd in her than for a certain small lady of our acquaintance to send to the office for her husband whenever there is the least bit of a thunder-shower, and to declare she feels perfectly safe when he is with her, no matter how hard it thunders."

It seemed to do him some good to say that, but I considered it a very senseless comparison, and told him so.

One day Irene came down from her room with a fine cambric skirt which she had worn to a party, and which needs must have the starch washed out and be laid away rough-dry till another occasion of importance might require it to be fresh laundried. It was a perfect marvel of embroidery, tucks and fine needlework of every kind, and was by far too precious an article to be trusted to the hands of my washer-woman; so Miss Grimes begged permission to dabble it out herself. It was granted, of course, and in a very short time the skirt was swinging by two pins from the clothes-line in the back yard.

We were sitting by the window with our sewing, when an appalling apparition crossed our sight—a cow with a white petticoat over her head! The wind had expanded the skirt like a balloon, and Satan entering into that cow, had possessed her to put her head through it, detach it from the line and walk off with it!

Miss Grimes uttered a wild shriek and started in pursuit. The cow had stopped a few yards from the house and stood still till Irene went quite up to her; but when the excited woman attempted to reclaim her property, the preverse animal started on again at a slow trot. Some carpenters were roofing a house near by and stopped their work to watch the sport and volunteer such advice as, "Head her off!" "Back her into a corner!" "Surround her!" and one more wicked than they all sang out that old army slang: "Grab a root!"

The energetic spinster heeded them not, but steadily followed the cow, which did not seem in the least frightened, but frequently paused till Irene approached and touched her side, when, with a toss of her horns, she would trot on again. I think the pursuit might have continued up to the present time had not relief appeared in the form of Mr. Robertson. From my outlook at the chamber window I observed him approach from the opposite end of the street. Seeing the cow with something on her head, and Miss Grimes in the road with nothing on hers, he stopped and seemed to consider a moment what it might mean. Being a man of quick perceptions, he was not long in arriving at a conclusion. He retraced his steps a short distance and opened a gate leading into a blind alley. The cow came on and was gently turned through the open gateway. Mr R. followed, closing the gate behind him. In a few moments it was again opened, the cow emerged at a brisk pace, followed by the "Professor," with the skirt hanging over his arm. Irene stood still in the middle of the street, waiting the return of the conquering hero. And surely no knight of the chivalrous ages ever laid at the feet of his lady love a trophy of his valor with more of tender pride than Lemuel Robertson felt when he delivered that skirt to the hands of its fair owner!

Early that afternoon a livery rig, the best in town, appeared at our door, and Irene appeared at the same moment, equipped for a ride. She kissed me affectionately, and said, "Don't wait tea for us dear; we may return late, and you know we both like nothing better in the evening than a bowl of bread and milk."

They returned in the moonlight. A boy stood waiting to take the team. Mr. Robertson and Miss Grimes walked slowly up to the house and seated themselves on the veranda to continue a conversation which had doubtless been running for three hours and a half. I sat just inside the open window and heard the "Professor" say, in a low tone, "I am so glad you like Lynn Creek. You shall have a beautiful house there. I will have my mill and we shall have each other."

Hearing this, I discreetly retired.

The next morning the announcement of their engagement was made in due form, and received by us with suitable expressions of surprise and warm congratulations. Irene was to return to her Eastern home in a few days, there to remain until Mr. Robertson brought her back in the spring as his bride.

"I have always thought," said Miss Grimes, "that a courtship did not deserve the name unless there were at least a few months of correspondence. And I assure you," turning to her betrothed, "you will find me a very exacting correspondent. I mean to allow you very little time for anything else but letter-writing."

To this Mr. R. made no reply, but simply beamed on her with very much the same expression he had worn when on the day of her arrival he pronounced her "a lady of remarkable spirit."

"And now, my good friends," said the nice old fellow, turning to us, "we will leave our own personal affairs, in which you have manifested so kind an interest, and speak of a little matter of business in which you are equally interested with ourselves. I have long had it in my mind to make you an offer for your patent invalid bed. Would you take a thousand dollars for it—I mean for the exclusive right, as I shall not care about operating a limited territory?"

Jerome laughed a little nervously, then replied: "I believe it would be a practical and useful thing; but I fear you would lose money by buying it at any price. I would cheerfully sell for half the sum you name, and could not think of taking more."

"Now, Jerome," said Irene, in the advising grandmotherly manner she often assumed toward him, "I do not like to hear you speak in that way. I fear you have no just conception of the importance of money in this world. You must know that I am to have a half interest in this investment, and I never take less than a five-hundred-dollar share in anything."

"You need have no fears, doctor, that we will be heavy losers by the transaction," said Mr. Robertson. "My brother is connected with the medical college at Kelawna, and has weekly clinics at St. Joseph's Hospital. He is particularly pleased with the fracture attachment (I sent him one of your illustrated circulars), and has promised me to introduce the bed at St. Joseph's, and use his influence for its introduction at other places."

Jerome opened his eyes very wide. "Dr. Robertson! I know of him. Why, he is dean of the faculty at Kelawna, and the first surgeon in the State."

"He is my brother," said our "Professor," simply. "And now if you are willing to accept my offer, and have that little model handy and a patent deed about you, we will conclude the bargain at once."

Well, the patent-right money fenced our lot, plastered and "underpinned" our house, gave us a start of books again and helped our small beginnings in many ways. Jerome has now all the business he can attend to, and so have I, though I never re-opened my school after Miss Grimes' visit. Little Lem came to us before the ensuing year, and baby Irene followed rather closely. The sweet duties of motherhood keep mind and hands fully occupied, notwithstanding one or the other of our dear babes is almost constantly at the beautiful house on Lynn Creek, the home of their devoted god-parents.—*Harper's Magazine for May.*

The Desk at Which the Declaration of Independence Was Written.

The Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, in the course of the Centennial oration delivered by him on the Fourth of July, 1876, in Music Hall, Boston, exhibited to the audience there gathered the writing-desk upon which the Declaration of Independence was written, and the thoughts suggested by this interesting historical relic formed one of the most eloquent passages of his oration. He concluded his allusion to this desk with these words:

"Long may it find its appropriate and appreciating ownership in the successive generations of a family in which the blood of Virginia and Massachusetts is so auspiciously commingled. Should it, in the lapse of years, ever pass from the hands of those to whom it will be so precious an heirloom, it could only have its fit and final place among the choicest and most cherished treasures of the nation, with the above title deeds of independence it so proudly asserted."

This evening the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, who is now in Washington, took the occasion of a call at the Executive Mansion to deliver personally to the President, as a gift to the United States, this little mahogany desk on which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. It was presented in the name of the children of the late Mr. Joseph Coolidge, of Boston, to whom it was given by Jefferson himself in 1825, whose granddaughter Mr. Coolidge had married, and it has an autograph inscription as follows: "Thomas Jefferson gives this writing-desk to Joseph Coolidge, Jr., as a memorial of his affection." It was made from a drawing of his own, by Ben. Randall, cabinet-maker, of Philadelphia, with whom he first lodged on his arrival in that city, in May, 1776, and the identical one on which he wrote the Declaration of Independence. Politics as well as religion has its superstitions; these gaining strength with time, may one day give imaginary value to this relic for its association with the birth of the great charter of our independence." It is probable that this desk will be deposited in the fire-proof library of the State Department, where is kept the original draft of the Declaration, written on this desk.—*Washington Cor. Boston Advertiser.*

—Nothing can be great which is not right.—*Samuel Johnson.*

The Engineering Achievements of the Century.

The engineering achievements of this century, beyond a question, are those for which it will be most famous and longest remembered. Theologians and philosophers may split hairs about metaphysical science, but they will all join in the celebration of what the engineers have done for modern progress.

The past fifty years have been the most fruitful in the whole history of engineering, and therefore the review of its accomplishments in that time, given in a recent address by Mr. William Barlow, the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers of England, has a general interest. When that institution was chartered in 1828 the question of transportation was one of great urgency. The canals, which dated in England from about the year 1758, had increased to a length exceeding 3,000 miles, but they were inadequate to the commercial needs of the country. In the United States the Erie Canal had been opened in 1825, and had been hailed as an engineering feat of astonishing magnitude, and at about the same time lesser canals had been constructed in other States. Both here and in England much attention was bestowed on turnpike roads during the first quarter of the century.

The steam locomotive was then only in its early experimental stages. In 1830, however, the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened, and George Stephenson's predictions regarding the value of locomotives for tractive power began to be realized. So great was the want of improved methods of transportation, that the spread of the railway system was rapid far beyond even Stephenson's expectation. In his address to the British Association in 1875, forty-five years after, Sir John Hawkshaw estimated the total length of railroads then existing at 160,000 miles, and the total capital invested in them at $16,000,000,000.

Since that time railroad extension has gone on throughout the world, though during the last five years, owing to the prevailing business depression, the progress has not been so rapid as it was just previously. Yet even in England, which already seemed well supplied with railways, the increase in miles was more than two thousand between 1870 and 1880, and the railway traffic has nearly quadrupled in twenty-five years. With us, from 1872, the year when railways were built with such astonishing rapidity, reaching 7,340 miles of new constructions, up to last year, there was a decline in the progress; but 1879 witnessed the addition of 4,430 miles of rail, and 1880 promises to be one of the most active years we have ever known in the business. The total mileage of railway in the United States was, at the beginning of 1880, 86,263 miles, or one mile of railroad for every 574 inhabitants, a ratio greatly in excess of that of Europe, which has one mile of railroad to every 3,300 persons.

Outside the new railroads to be built in the United States, there is field enough for railroad extension in Asia and Africa. China has as yet no railroads, Japan has only begun to lay them, and Africa is almost without railways for the 350,000,000 inhabitants Mr. Brassey gives that continent. South America, also, is still only supplied to a very limited extent, and in Central Asia they must be vastly extended.

Steam navigation has had nearly its whole growth within the last fifty years. It is true there were 344 steam vessels in existence in 1828, but they were of an average of only about ninety tons each, and were chiefly employed in river and coasting traffic. Ocean steam navigation had not yet been attempted, and not until 1838 did the successful voyages of the Sirius and Great Western make it an accomplished fact. Before 1836 the largest ships afloat were between 800 and 900 tons burden, and about 220 horse power. Now the Cunard steamship Servia is of 7,500 tons, and 10,000 horse power, while the Inflexible of the British navy has a tonnage of 11,600 tons, and its engines a power of 8,000 horses, and the Italia of the Italian navy will be of 13,200 tons burden and 18,000 horse power.

The telegraph, which was first brought into practical use in this country in 1844, between Washington and Baltimore, employed 400,000 miles of wire as long ago as 1875. Since that time its extension under the sea and on land has been enormous.

The employment of gas as a means of illumination was only beginning fifty years ago, but now the capital invested in the London Gas Works alone amounts to $60,000,000, and in the whole United Kingdom it amounts to $200,000,000.

And these are only a few of the engineering achievements of the half century. Mr. Barlow estimates the total capital invested in engineering works during that time at $17,500,000,000, or about $350,000,000 annually. Of this vast sum nineteen-twentieths belong to railways, steamships, docks, harbors, and telegraphs, all of which are directed to improving and extending the means of transport for passengers and merchandise, and the communication of intelligence.

The great feature of the last half century, therefore, has been the improvement of the methods of transportation, in obedience to the urgent demand made by commerce for new and swifter means of intercourse.—*N. Y. Sun.*

We All Have It Now.

Spring fever. How it settles down on us. The rays of the sun come to us at just the right slant, warming our system into a delicious desire for repose; the soil, easily yielding to the pressure of our foot, frost all out of it, and the summer's heat not having baked it into hardness, tempts us to stroll; the green, cheery appearance of the short blades of young grass is so restful to the eye; to be inside four walls is such a bore when the birds are striking up their overture to nature's divine opera of summer, that we feel as though we should like to lean against the south side of a fence, pull our hat over our eyes, and whittle and stretch and yawn all day long. O, the spring fever is the laziest, nicest disease ever invented by man, and medicine, thank heaven! can't cure it.—*New Haven Register.*

—Hatred is like fire—it makes even light rubbish deadly.

—Men's muscles move better when their souls are making merry music.